

The Cleveland Museum of Art is celebrating its 35th Anniversary with an exhibition of some of its birthday gifts this summer, in Gallery IX, centered around The Edgard B. Greene Collection of Miniature Portraits. Unquestionably it is the finest collection of this art in America. We all have reverence for the small and fine, because of its order and elegance.

founder
Mr. Edward B. Greene, son-in-law of the late Mr. J. H. Wade, who was a founder of the Museum and giver of so many of its treasures, has served the Museum with talents for administration and connoisseurship, by no means common among donors. He combines his liking for miniatures with love of the humanism of history. He began his first collection, early portrait engravings, to employ some unexpected leisure in Europe. Like Mr. Wade he, personally, collected, going into his subject through travel and reading, making his own selections through intelligent dealers. When the portrait engravings 279 with 14 collateral drawings, they were too valuable a collection for an individual to house; Mr. Greene gave them to Yale University, where they would be of the utmost service to art and history students.

He made his second collection, beginning in France in 1926, in an even smaller field, the portrait miniature. It has occupied most of his leisure time since then. There are ninety of his "paintings in the little" Sam'l Pepys' name for them, English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and American, by the greatest of the "limners" as

practitioners of the art were called. Their subjects dramatize the past, from the 16th to the early 19th centuries; some unidentified but with faces whose beauty or character make certain of their importance; others so famous they still seem to live, Wellington, Marlborough, Louis XIV, Empress Josephine, Lt. Gen. Daniel Burr, Anne of Denmark, and a shrewd-faced little man who has been called Queen Elizabeth's Admiral, Sir Francis Drake.

The Miniaturist was the descendant of the medieval manuscript illuminator.

Hans Holbein the Younger was the first great one. Few of his miniatures remain though the Victoria and Albert Museum does have the two-inch circle of vellum he brought back as his report, when Henry VIII sent him to wait upon Princess Anne of Cleves. The King liked the picture of the sleepy-eyed young woman, enough to make her his fourth Queen.

Today the miniature has multiple value because photography has made its art practically a lost one. But the tiny works will never lose the human warmth that went into them, the many motived ardor that ordered them; the devotion which the limner, working with a single haired brush painted into them. They've been worn over thumping hearts; have been witnesses in schemes of state. Complacency has come to great folk who took snuff from the box, with a glance at its lid that pictured the face dear to the man-- or woman-- who pocketed the receptacle after companionable sneezes.

In the Greene Collection are all the great limner names, Hilliard, Oliver, Cooper,- called by some the greatest of them all- Fragonard, Augustin, Isabey, +e+e Plimer, Engleheart, Cosway, Fugger, Malbone, considered the best of the Americans by most people.

All mediums are represented, water color and gouache, the most used; oil; pencil and enamel. Earliest ones are painted on backs of playing cards, or vellum; later on ivory, copper or gold.

Don't be surprised to find the miniatures something more than pretty, though the pretty ones are superlatively so. They are the work of great artists, who, given subjects of character, did not hesitate to interpret it. The wonder is how much power can be concentrated in such small compass. Often the added details of costume and surroundings seem to draw us within the little compartment of the frame to partake of the airs and sounds and spirit of the time.

Mr. Greene's interest in miniatures, leading into ~~fe~~ fields of literature, history and manners, has brought great satisfaction ot him. But, like the engravings, the collection grew too fast, so he is sharing it with Cleveland through the Art Museum.

He has also made possible publication of the handsome catalogue of the collection, compiled by Louise H. Burchfield, associate curator of paintings of the Museum, who has studied the Greene Collection in relation to the principal ones, going to Europe for the purpose. It has a foreword by William M. Milliken, director of the Museum, and a long analysis of the Collection by Harry B. Wehle, research curator in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. All the miniatures are illustrated, eleven in color. The catalogue is edited by Silvia Wunderlich, Museum editorial assistant.

The ~~minatiires~~ miniatures will be one more lure to bring the world to Cleveland this summer.